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ABSTRACT

The style of management in higher education has changed significantly in recent decades. The groups that have demanded, and in most cases been given, a share in the governance of the institution are the administration, the faculty, the students, and the non-faculty staff. The problem arises in implementing the claims for a share of authority. Some recent trends toward a more effective system of governance within this context are examined. The first is decentralization, which may be approached by the development of autonomous small sub-units having authority to bring decisions to a concluding point or influencing decisions and policy formulation. The second trend is the establishment of a joint council or university senate, a move toward centralization. The third trend in governance is the strengthening of the executive role for prompt and decisive action, which requires administrative accountability and continuous evaluation. Shared authority does not necessitate a balance of power but an emphasis on sharing. The concern is not the problem of whether one should share but the problems of sharing. The attempt is to develop a system of governance that balances the emphases on decentralization, centralization, and executive authority. (JMF)

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The Management Challenge: Now and Tomorrow

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: THE MANAGEME[illegible]

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THE MANAGEMENT DILEMMA: SHARED AUTHORITY

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Following is the talk presented by Dr. Lisensky at the November 23 panel session on "The Management Team" during NACUBO's 1971 national meeting at The Waldorf-Astoria in New York City. Dr. Lisensky's fellow panelists were President Joel P. Smith, of Denison University, and Marwin O. Wrolstad, Vice President for Business Affairs and Treasurer, Lawrence University.

The style of management in higher education has changed significantly in the last few decades. Writers suggest that these revisions have been imposed by complexity, size, and most recently by the financial crisis. One major change has been the replacement of the presidential system of leadership traditional in American higher education with a task-oriented administration. Most campuses have developed a form of cabinet management. The president, academic dean, business officer, dean of students, and development officer have become the decision-makers, or as some have stated, the new power bloc. The degree of autonomy which each official has over his or her area is determined by the style of the president and the capabilities of the staff.

With the creation of cabinet management, new responsibilities are placed on each participant. Rather than being disseminators of information to the top executive, each member of the cabinet becomes an educator. The task of the business manager is to make other members of the cabinet aware of the process of managing educational resources. New academic programs need to be costed out, both for initial implementation and for the long term. The academic dean needs to emphasize criteria other than efficiency that need to be applied to a program being analyzed. Thus, in time, each individual on the cabinet should be able to cross over into the other areas with comfort and an assurance of an expert's guidance. The by-product of this interrelationship should be effectiveness and efficiency together, with unanimity on, or at least acceptance of, decisions.

This style of management does have the potential to increase the tensions between the cabinet members and the faculty. The separation of the president from the faculty as well as clear, concise, unified positions on the part of the cabinet may suggest the possibilities of a power bloc. The process of centralizing authority and responsibility in these few persons runs counter to the order of the day, direct participation of all members of all the constitutencies. It is not hard to find fellow administrators outside the cabinet to be the most critical of the decisions rendered by that group. Conversation about the creation of a more inclusive administrative council, or about permitting all administrators to vote in faculty meetings, indicates a request for a recognized place in the organization. The problems of power and authority are not unique to faculty or students.

Another major change is the open style of administration, whereby detailed information is collected and disseminated concerning the operations of the institutions of higher education. You only have to remember the number of computer printouts that devour you at the beginning of each month to be aware that there is, at least, a data gathering explosion. Lack of trust, both internally and externally, has forced the administration to open its decision-making process to public scrutiny. Because of previous training in cabinet management, most often administrators are willing to provide more information than usually requested. However, as we refine the development of

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techniques for cost analysis and planned programmed budgeting and use this data for future choices, those affected will want even more to challenge the suitability and the reliability of the data.

This is a serious problem for the business manager, because he must present information that is easily understood and appropriate to the issue. A serious error can be committed when more information is provided than is needed for the issue at hand. In the long run, the desire to be an agent for change by revealing new problems through budget data can be extremely costly in morale or mutual trust unless the recipients have been prepared.

Both of these changes—cabinet management and open-style dissemination of information—are directions of the future. The demands of the job will not permit presidents personally to initiate academic reforms, supervise student life, develop a budget, and cultivate new areas of funding. There must and will be a division of labor. As well, more information will be provided for all constituencies in the future, rather than less information.

As important as these directions are for the management team, they do not address the crucial issue of the times. We could discuss the different roles that a dean could play in the management team (I opt for the role of change agent), but the style of the team is built on personalities, capabilities, and situations. But with the suggestion that I discuss "the value and need of student input and participation" in "Putting It All Together," for me the most crucial issue was introduced. The question is not cooperation among the various administrators, but the relationship of the management team to the other constituencies of the university—students, faculty, trustees, and staff other than principal administrators. How is it possible to manage when there is a struggle for power and authority?

The Constituencies of Management

When we look at the contemporary scene, we find numerous constituencies involved or seeking to be involved in the process of management. Often faculty participate in budget-making, supervise numerous managerial activities, and even hold membership on boards of trustees. Students raise their voices, and sometimes their votes, in determining the character and conditions of their education. This system of multiple authority-relations of differing strengths is the major reason that higher education is one of the most complex of all types of organizations. The commitment to shared authority distinguishes sharply the difference between organization in education and in industry.

Does the system of governance make a difference? Indeed, governance does make a difference, for the system of governance on a campus establishes the culture in which education takes place. If the bureaucratic form of organization prevails, there will be a different method of evaluation than if a community form of organization dominates the system. If shared authority is not the means of achieving authority, the only alternative seems to be collective bargaining. Although institutions can exist within the collective bargaining framework, acceptance of the idea that a campus is a collection of status-bound interest groups limits the process of discussion and the decisions in the university. The collective bargaining approach calls for sharply defined power relationships, with the mode of operation being confrontation and resistance. This does not suggest the most conducive climate for learning.

Conflicts seem inevitable in a society built on rapid and continuous change, among interest groups on the college campus and in an institution that is almost non-organizational as it attempts to protect students and faculty from organizational involvement to enhance teaching and learning. Conflict, however, does not demand confrontation for resolution, but very well might necessitate a strategy of collaboration. It is in developing improved systems of governance that we might find the challenge for the management team and, in turn, the potential for the management of conflict.

The Question of Student Participation

Who has a claim to a share of the authority? Seldom has there been a question regarding the claim to a share of the authority on the part of the faculty. Faculty participation in campus governance is easily justified by reference to their qualifications, commitment, experience, and necessary cooperation if the purposes of the institution are to be achieved. It is interesting that we do not use these same justifications for members of other constituencies.

Most of the debate recently has been over the justification for student participation in governance. We dismiss them by emphasizing that students are inexperienced, transitory, espouse special interests, and lack sufficient time to merit involvement in the directions of the institution. The defense rests on the right of a student to be a participant in his community, the right of political expression. However, even though this is an acceptable position, the crucial issue is the awareness that the highest achievements in education are most often realized when the learner is deeply involved personally in the activities of learning and can contribute to the structure of the learning process.

Education should be designed to provide experiences which enable individuals to become effective participants in society. Education for citizenship is a realis-

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tic goal for education. Too few of us in higher education know how to operate in the public sphere and are disinterested in the relationship of ideas and action. One of our great contemporary problems is the gulf between layman and expert. We have not devised a way in which the citizen can be a part of the input in the decisions that are affecting his life. This is especially significant as one thinks of technology and values. There is a vital need to revitalize the citizen's role in the decision-making process.

However, there is another group on campus that has been neglected as a constituency, even more than have the students. It is the non-faculty staff. If cooperation is essential for a task to be achieved, then these persons also must be involved in the system of governance. It is in this area that the business officers have probably one of their greatest challenges. Those who are most often disenfranchised on college campuses are members of the business officer's staff. This is a part of the belief that this office is unrelated to the real educational process. It is somewhat of a paradox that those who were considered unnecessary have become the center of attention during our present financial crisis. The community model of governance requires all members to be integral parts of the decision-making.

So far this has been easy, but now the difficult part. How can these claims in a share of authority be implemented? The first requirement is to file a disclaimer. There is no ideal form of governance that fits all institutions. Because of personalities, past history, style of operation, each system of governance must be suited to the particular institution. However, this does not mean that just any structure is acceptable, for some structures enhance the possibilities of trust, communication, and efficiency more than others. As well, changes in organization and governance can be a threat to institutional purposes. It is possible that the drive toward participatory democracy or even representative democracy has led to rigidities that intensify the fragile nature of our institutions.

If the goals of a system of governance are to enable a university to be a progressive institution, responsive to the changing needs, compatible with improvements in education, committed to efficiency of operation and prompt and decisive action, as Howard R. Bowen suggests, what trends are discernable that seem more capable of meeting these goals than are the present procedures? At this point, I need to suggest that my experiences in education have been in private liberal arts colleges, and the evaluations may need reinterpretation to be applicable to the larger, public universities.

A Look at Recent Trends

One major trend that must be intensified is the move toward *finding additional ways of effectively and meaningfully involving increasing numbers of persons in the system of governance.* This process of decentralization might take two different approaches. The first is the development of autonomous small sub-units. These sub-units should have the authority to make decisions. The autonomy of a dormitory to set its own rules, or of a departmental council to establish its own procedures, are prime examples. This ability to bring decisions to a concluding point, not to be carried on into the next part of the maze, is vital. This might overcome the frustrations one has about committees that do not resolve issues. There is a new phrase on campus that emphasizes this frustration: "Promise them anything, but give them a committee." How devastating an experience to be a member of a committee which submits a report to another committee which, after introducing its own form of wisdom, sends it on to the faculty to be attacked by amendments. Sub-units must be developed with the ability to finalize with only an unusual request for review.

The second approach to decentralization would move from an emphasis on authority to that of influencing decisions. Attempts should be made to bring crucial matters to the attention of the total campus for public discussion. Consensus has its own time span, so that sometimes the emphasis would be to provide data before a decision is reached, at other times to give reasoned justification for conclusions that have been presented, and sometimes the submission of results for evaluation. However, an opportunity must be

provided to influence policy formulation by all who are affected by the policy. This mechanism for decentralizing the influence system emphasizes participatory democracy. Opportunities for analysis and discussion of issues, with a reasonable size for good communication, would enable the creative force for change to emerge from any member of the community.

During my numerous visits to Yugoslavia, a country which has developed one of the most comprehensive systems of participating democracy, I have been deeply impressed with the effects of their approach. The development of the workers' councils and neighborhood units provides each individual an opportunity to share in the decision-making process. Because of this structure, there is less a sense of alienation from the political system than we are witnessing. Although great numbers do not avail themselves of the opportunity to participate, they are informed, and, as one Yugoslav suggested, capable of participating if they desire because there is an established structure.

This approach would help overcome the problems of representative government which is too often tokenism or nonrepresentation. Committees have as their greatest asset the ability to disenfranchise their members from the rest of the community. If you are not a member of the committee, how can you trust its decisions? Also, it is difficult for faculty or student members to preserve their roles as representatives of a constituency, because they are faced with a new responsibility far beyond their represented interest. Thus, committees are understood to be arms of the administration. Open dialogue among those most concerned about the matter under consideration is a viable alternative. There are, however, many dangers, the most apparent the possibility that politically preoccupied minorities of students and faculty may capture the system. The greatest asset would be the humanizing of the system by providing an informal organization for involvement.

The Function of the Joint Council

Another necessary trend toward a more effective system of governance would be *the establishment of a joint council or university senate.* This would be a move toward centralization. All constituencies would be represented on the council. The council would deal with all areas of policy, academic and nonacademic, its main charge a commitment to the welfare of the institution. It would be the principal body to centralize policy-making, to review the policies of subunits, and in turn the principal consulting body for the president.

It might seem odd to establish a position on each end of the continuum, defending decentralization and centralization. However, this has been intended, for somehow there must be a balance between the rights of individuals in groups and the social responsibilities of the organization. There is a need to reinforce centralization so that planning can be for the sake of the institution, and at the same time to decentralize the influencing system in which each individual can have involvement in his quality of life. We must learn to devise different structures for different problems, to merge authority and influence systems with the appropriate decision-making levels.

What does one do then with the faculty meeting and all of the committee structures that we now have on university campuses? I do not know, but I have raised questions in my own mind whether the most appropriate method would be one in which we train individuals to become involved in activities on an *ad hoc* committee basis and then dissolve the structure when the activity has come to completion. So many committee involvements are debates, not over questions of policy, but of implementation. Implementation is the responsibility of administrators. The most critical analysis one can make of participating democracy is its inability to plan. There must be a central body responsible to the institution if it is to effectively survive.

Helping the President Lead

To add to the confusion, the third trend in governance needed for effectiveness is the *strengthening of the executive role.* The need for prompt and decisive action on the part of the university calls for a structural setting in which administrative leadership can operate. Many of the changes necessary in higher education cannot be expected to be adopted without the ability to bypass special interests. It is the president who must see the institution as a whole and protects its members even from themselves. The problem of providing opportunities for individuals to operate within their own interest groups creates great concern for overall policy. We found, as we studied the housing situation in Yugoslavia, that they first initiated a program in which they subsidized the rent for an apartment on the basis of a standard overall policy. Thus, the rent is based upon the number of rooms and not on one's income. Therefore, the subsidization is more beneficial to those who are in the higher income brackets. When the issue of increasing rents comes before the assembly, it is those individuals who are receiving the benefits who are asked to vote against themselves. The expected happens, and there has been no change in policy.

As we are forced to meet the changes of society and the demands for immediate action, it is hard to believe that people will vote themselves out of their special areas of benefit. University administration must be given broader areas of freedom and authority over the academic body politics. The faculty needs to delegate power to the administration much in the same way that the trustees have delegated that power in the most recent decades.

This new leadership can only be accepted if there is administrative accountability with the possibility of change in administration when necessary. Included in the evaluation of an administrator would be the techniques used for getting advice, a record of the process by which decisions are made, and an auditing of the results of the decisions. It would seem appropriate that presidents, deans, business officers, deans of students, and development officers be obligated to seek readmission every four years. Administration must be free to carry out its work in a manner of its own choosing, without limits. It would be a joy to be able to make mistakes. Those in this type of authority pattern would be obligated to be sensitive to, and a part of, the influencing system of the faculty, students, and non-faculty staff. Aware that the task of the president is so complex, a new role of the cabinet members would be to be connected with the influence system in such a way that the president would not be devoid of the impact of the thinking of the community.

The present position is skeptical of participating democracy, representative democracy, or governance which ignores the will of the governed. Shared authority does not necessitate a balance of power but an emphasis on sharing. The concern is not the problem of whether one should share but the problems of sharing. The attempt is to develop a system of governance which balances the emphases on decentralization, centralization and executive authority.

However, it is important to realize that one cannot use structures to return loyalty and dedication. Trust and respect are indispensable for the operation of any governance system. Too often, we have used rules to insure that which is no longer provided by an accepted definition of the situation. Campuses spend much time over codes of regulation, rigid procedures, detailed operational manuals, and job descriptions. It is not uncommon that on these same campuses you will hear the statement that positions are more important than the persons who occupy them. It makes no difference who the president is, he is the president, and suspect. The issue is not a call for sentimental cooperation but respect for the other individual or group and an attempt to understand the basis of their action. Structures are only successful if the norms of the institution are supportive. There must be shared respect, shared authority.

Higher education, 1971, may be in the lull before the storm, or we could be in the eye of the hurricane or, in fact, the storm may have blown itself out. However, we do have a chance to look back and see the weaknesses of colleges in crisis and find the impetus for initiating change. What we may be engaged in is a last gasp at developing a democratic model, but for the sake of the academic climate, it is worth the effort.

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